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ABSTRACT

This book examines the development, implementation, and aftermath of the U.S. government's language policy for indigenous people from 1860 to 1900. Analysis of archival documents, autobiographies, ethnography, and fiction examines why and how government-sponsored English-language classrooms for Native students came into being, how European American and Native teachers mediated the government's English-only directive, and what students did with the language after they learned it. It focuses on the ways that European American and Native people used English to represent themselves and each other as they sought to fulfill their own political, educational, and cultural agendas. Through these multiple perspectives, the book reveals a paradox. Even as English functioned as a disruptive and destructive instrument of linguistic and cultural control, it was also a generative tool for expressing diverse ways of seeing, saying, and believing. Chapters focus on (1) the links between language policy, development of residential boarding schools for Indian children, and the religious, racial, and nationalist ideologies of government officials and missionaries; (2) teaching methods, teacher attitudes, and teaching experiences in Indian schools; (3) the experiences of Native teachers--Lilah Denton Lindsey, Thomas Wildcat Alford, Sarah Winnemucca, and Luther Standing Bear; (4) Native students' experiences of language and language instruction; and (5) the writings of Zitkala-Sa, in which her ownership of English enabled her to criticize European-American culture and portray the value of Native women's activities and community activism. (Contains over 300 references, notes, an index, and photographs.) (SV)

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